



Street-O organiser's manual

This document is intended to be a brief(ish) manual to help organisers of Street-O events. Any comments or suggestions for changes welcome – please email [streeto \[at\] sloweb.org.uk](mailto:streeto[at]sloweb.org.uk)

Venue

Usually a pub is best, although sometimes events are hosted from sports centres/clubs etc. It needs to be somewhere that will let us reserve a reasonably good-sized area, somewhere that serves food, and ideally fairly close to a train/tube station.

Map

Course maps are put together using Ollie O'Brien's *Open Orienteering Map* (OOM) website – <http://oobrien.com/oom/uk.php>, which enables you to quickly get a street-O style map of any area of London (or indeed, almost the whole world). You should select the "Street-O map" option with a "Plain" background, zoom into the required level, and then use the "Create a Map" option. There are links on the website to help files which should answer any queries related to the software; for any specific problems, you can ask Ollie directly (email [mail \[at\] oliverobrien.co.uk](mailto:mail[at]oliverobrien.co.uk)).

Whilst OOM provides a very good starting point, the maps produced are not always perfect – small footpaths may be missed off, roads may have changed, etc – and you should always try to check that the map is correct throughout the area (and particularly at or near control sites). In more central London areas with lots of small paths/courtyards/alleyways, OOM is sometimes less good at providing clear mapping, and you should be particularly careful with control sites around these areas if the map is not clear.

Map corrections can be made fairly simply by directly editing the Open Streetmap website (see <http://www.openstreetmap.org/>).

We usually use a 1:10,000 (A4 size) map, and I would certainly recommend this scale for any of the more central London built-up areas. Sometimes 1:12,500 or even 1:15,000 may be ok for less detailed (more outer-London) areas, enabling you to cover a larger area, but be careful with pinpointing exact control locations when using the larger scale maps.

It's well worth getting familiar with OOM sooner rather than later. At least work out the area that you can use for your course, as it might need some fine tuning to get sensible boundaries. As there's currently no save/edit functionality, you need to run through it once each time – it's worth keeping track of detail at the edges so you can precisely replicate it each time.

Course planning

There are no strict rules, but usually around 30-40 control points is best. Ideally there should be enough controls, scattered across a wide enough area, so that the fastest runners cannot possibly visit every control within 60 minutes and still need to carefully plan their routes to optimise their score. (The fastest Street-O runners might typically cover up to 15km in one hour.)



You should aim to have the controls reasonably scattered across the area with no obvious optimal route – there should be lots of different route options and it should be tricky to spot the best route to optimise score for any given running speed.

We use a scoring system where controls 1-19 are worth 10 points, 20-29 worth 20 points, 30-39 worth 30 points, 40-49 worth 40 points. Please stick to this system as it makes it easier for people to know how many points each control is worth just by looking at the control numbers on the map, which helps with route planning.

Time penalties should be 20 points per minute or part-minute late back (previously some organisers have used a slightly different formula, but we are trying to standardise this now).

Control clues

The main criteria for street-O clues is that the questions should be unambiguous, and the answers should be very obvious to see when you have reached the correct location (it's not supposed to be a treasure hunt!) but very difficult to guess unless you have been there (some people may have local knowledge!). People shouldn't have to spend any time searching for the clue answer once they have reached the correct location, or read long signs to find the answer buried away somewhere, and there shouldn't be any doubt about what the correct answer is when a runner has reached the correct location. All answers should be clearly visible at night under street lights – please check this!

It can helpful to include prompts that make it easy to spot, e.g. if a sign says "CAUTION 415 VOLTS", a clue could be "CAUTION ____ VOLTS". Check that the clues aren't visible from a long way off in one direction only (which may be unfair to runners who approach from the opposite direction), or that the answer to the clue can't be found somewhere else nearby (e.g. signs pointing towards the clue answer).

Postboxes are really good unambiguous control sites. There's a useful map-based database of them here: <http://www.dracos.co.uk/play/locating-postboxes/>. If you want them, the blue plaques are listed by borough on English Heritage's website: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/discover/blue-plaques/search/>. The problem with some of these is that they can be located quite a bit back from the main road, which can be difficult at night.

Other good sites include detail on signposts (which should be obvious/large), names/details of shops/pubs etc, house names/door colours, lamppost numbers, etc. Number of items in a location (e.g. "how many garages are here?") is ok as long as there are not too many count!

Please do double-check the location of all control points before finalising the map – it's surprising how often controls can be incorrectly marked on a wrong junction, or on the wrong side of a road, and you will know from experience how frustrating this can be for competitors!

If possible, it is recommended to get someone else to independently check the map and all of the control sites/clues before the event, to minimise the risk of checkpoints being marked in the wrong place or clues being too ambiguous or hard to find – a second pair of eyes can be invaluable in doing this, and reduce the risk of any unwanted complaints on the night!



Clue sheet

Although the format is standard across all events, the clue sheet itself should clearly state the points for each control, the 60-minute time limit and penalty points system (of 20 points per minute or part-minute late back).

Make sure you include space to record the runner's name, and it's probably best to include somewhere to finish time/total penalty points. You may want to include some scoring boxes etc to make it easier for markers on the night. It may be worth including an emergency contact mobile number and a note requesting that everyone reports back to the finish after running.

Details for website

Please aim to get the details for each event published around 3-4 weeks before the event (the earlier the better for publicity purposes!). Event details for the SLOW website should follow the standard format – e.g. see <http://sloweb.org.uk/streeto/may2013/> – making sure you include location/transport details.

Please send details of your event to [editors \[at\] sloweb.org.uk](mailto:editors@sloweb.org.uk) for inclusion on the SLOW website and SLOW Facebook page, and at the same time send an email with the details to the SLOW members email group [slowmail \[at\] yahoo.co.uk](mailto:slowmail@yahoo.co.uk). Feel free to do some of your own local publicity as well!

Map printing

Maps are usually printed by SLOW's Don McKerrow – to arrange this please send an email to [donmckerrow \[at\] tiscali.co.uk](mailto:donmckerrow@tiscali.co.uk). You will need to send Don a copy of the final map file and Q&A sheet, ideally by a couple of weeks before the event to allow sufficient time for printing and map collection.

On the night you should also bring along a few copies of the map without the controls on (but ideally with the Start/Finish on) for competitors to look at before they start. This is very helpful for newcomers in particular.

SI timing

Timing of competitors on the night is done using SLOW's SportIdent (SI) electronic timing system. Before the event you need to get hold of the SLOW box of hired SI dibbers (usually suggest 2 cases which is about 70 dibbers), the start/finish/clear units, and the "Henry" download printer, often from whoever hosted the previous event. If needed, instructions on synchronising the SI equipment is available on the 'Documents' page on the SLOW website.

Henry is very easy to use, and is simply a printer which records out finish times when people download. The downloaded times are not recorded or saved anywhere on a computer, so you will need to record the printed finish times.



When starting runners off on the night, there is no need to leave a fixed gap (e.g. 1 minute) between competitors – much better to avoid queues of people waiting to start, and just let everyone start whenever they are ready (unlike ‘normal’ orienteering, there is much less risk of people following each other in a street-O, given the score event format).

Scoresheet marking

It’s worth having a friend or two lined up to help with marking scoresheets on the night if possible, as competitors like to get their marked score sheets back before leaving for the evening. However you should always be able to find a few willing volunteers on the night to help with this if needed.

Make sure you record a copy of each runner’s score before handing back their score sheet!

If you have followed the recommendations in the Control Clues section above, hopefully there will be no disputes about the marking! However there usually are a few queries about wrongly marked answers. Generally it should be the competitor’s responsibility to record the correct answer for each question – we certainly don’t want to be giving marks for wrongly guessed answers.

The important thing is that the runner visited the correct control location – so if they can convince you that they did this, but for whatever reason recorded a different answer, then the organiser will need to exercise an element of judgement on whether to allow the score or not. However you must try to be consistent with everyone competing at the same event, which can be more difficult when someone appeals later on after other similarly wrongly-marked answers have already been returned.

Results

After the event, please send a spreadsheet with the results to [streeto \[at\] sloweb.org.uk](mailto:streeto@sloweb.org.uk). (No need to record the series league points, just the results from the night are fine.)

Please record the following fields: Name, male/female (not always obvious from the names!), Club (if any), total points (excluding penalties), time taken, penalty points, final score (after penalties). People who finish level on points are sorted according to time taken. Ideally please send a spreadsheet in the same format as the results which appear on the website – see link below for example (although no need for you to do the league points or overall series results):

<http://sloweb.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/streeto/greenwich-street-o-results/files/StreetO-201305.htm>

Also please send me a final copy of the map file (including all the controls), in JPG or PDF format, which I will then use for uploading to RouteGadget .

Any further questions – please ask for help!